

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



9 November 2011

Mr A Venkatesh
Headteacher
Littleover Community School
Pastures Hill
Littleover
Derby
DE23 4BZ

Dear Mr Venkatesh

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 18 and 19 October 2011 to look at work in music.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, students and the head of Derbyshire City and County Music Partnership; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of eight class lessons, two instrumental lessons, and an extra-curricular musical rehearsal.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Students enter Year 7 with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although many have had additional music experiences in their primary schools through the Wider Opportunities programme. By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment is broadly average.
- Of the small proportion of students who continue with music in Key Stage 4, most start with attainment above that generally expected at Key Stage 3 and attain above average outcomes at GCSE. Their progress in performing is stronger than in other elements, as a result of all students receiving additional instrumental tuition.

- The very small numbers of students who take A-level courses are taught in partnership with another local school in the shared sixth form. In those aspects taught at the school, observations show that students are making satisfactory progress and attain above average standards.
- The contribution of music to the school's ethos and students' personal well-being is strong. Students speak warmly of their teachers and behaviour is good in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
- Participation in music activities is broadly satisfactory although there is under-representation from certain groups - most notably boys, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- In lessons where teaching is stronger, students are given criteria to help them identify the features of successful musical responses and these are clearly explained by the teacher. However, too often outcomes are focused on aspects of organisation and task completion. As a result, opportunities are missed for both teachers and students to demonstrate their expectations or understanding through music.
- Lessons are well organised and students' good behaviour makes a positive contribution to learning. However, too frequently in lessons all students start from the same point and little account is taken of their different starting points or prior musical development and abilities.
- Effective instrumental and vocal lessons are well organised and make a strong contribution to students' standards of performance in Key Stage 4.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- While schemes of work in Key Stage 3 identify aspects of skill development, they are focused on technical aspects rather than a deeper sense of musical progression. While the breadth of listening activities is appropriate, there is insufficient planning for the development of singing of the musical use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the key stages. Similarly, in Key Stages 4 and 5 planning is brief and focused on examination specifications and criteria.
- A satisfactory range of ensemble activities is available, including choirs, bands, a jazz group and arts festival which alternate with the bi-annual musical theatre production which is highly valued by the school.
- The partnership with Derbyshire City and County Music Partnership is successful in promoting high standards of performance for those who receive instrumental tuition.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- Leaders and managers have a secure grasp of the strengths and areas for development within music provision in the school. They have identified correct priorities for improvement. There is a shared vision between the joint heads of music who understand the need to develop sense of musical progression within schemes of work and have identified aspects of provision which need further development.
- The music staff display a strong sense of unity and work well as a team. Teachers' professional development has been mainly concerned with developing Key Stage 4 examination courses. Although the school is aware of initiatives in primary music education, including the 'Wider Opportunities' initiative, it recognises that more consideration needs to be given to how teaching and the curriculum build on this work.
- The school works effectively in partnership with Derbyshire City and County Music Partnership to provide free instrumental and vocal lessons for GCSE students and as a result students attain high standards of performance which are celebrated by the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that there is an overarching sense of musical progression throughout the Key Stage 3 curriculum and in lesson planning and that there are sufficient and sustained development of singing and the musical use of ICT
- ensuring that teaching takes account of students' prior musical learning and abilities and that opportunities are maximised for both teachers and students to demonstrate their expectations or understanding through music.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop music in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector